



**COUNTY OF DUTCHESS**  
BOARD OF HEALTH

**DUTCHESS COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH**

**Minutes**

**Thursday, September 15, 2022**

The regular monthly meeting of the Dutchess County Board of Health was held virtually on Microsoft Teams and at the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral & Community Health (DBCH), 85 Civic Center Plaza – Suite 106, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 on the above date.

**PRESENT:** John Fallon, NP (Virtual)  
Laura Fil, DO  
Lobsang T. Lungay, MD, President (Virtual)  
Doug McHoul, Legislative Rep. (Virtual)  
David McNary, Vice President  
Maria Muller, RN  
Marc Nelson, MPA, Secretary  
Melissa Nelson-Perron, MD

**ABSENT:** Alexander Cohen, MD

**VISITORS:** Ruchi Patel (Virtual)  
Anthony Ruggiero, MPA, DC DBCH Assistant Commissioner of Administration  
Livia Santiago-Rosado, MD, FACEP, DC DBCH Commissioner  
Debbie Thomas, MHA, DC DBCH  
Director of Performance Management & Data Analytics

**CALL TO ORDER** – Dr. Lungay called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

**DECLARATION OF A QUORUM** – A quorum was called.

**MINUTES** – The minutes of the August 18, 2022, meeting were reviewed. Mr. McNary made a motion to approve the June minutes, Dr. Fil seconded, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

**SECRETARY'S UPDATE** – No correspondence

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORT** – The bivalent Covid vaccine has been approved and includes Omicron antigen and the original strain. Hope this will give us better protection heading into the winter and the vaccine is widely available at pharmacies and doctor's offices. Considering

a Public Health Advisory for providers. If you are 2 months out from your last booster and 12 years or older you are eligible. We are confident there is an adequate supply, and it is free of charge. Currently, the department is not setting up any clinics due to the existing infrastructure. Flu season is upon us and it is a public health priority to re-engage the community on regular vaccinations included the flu. The department held 2 Monkeypox vaccine clinics for eligible individuals where we administered 120 doses. We also redistributed vaccine in partnership with SunRiver's Mobile Clinic who held an event in Beacon. We are still holding with 10 cases in Dutchess County and no new cases since August 24. This leads us to hope we have contained the spread in Dutchess County. There is a set of criteria that make someone eligible, and we have targeted that population at higher risk of infection.

NYSDOH declared a state of emergency for a symptomatic case of Polio in Rockland County. This was primarily for funding purposes. The CDC has been doing wastewater surveillance in Rockland and adjacent counties which have shown the virus to be circulating since at least April. This is concerning because due to Covid families have delayed regular immunization. Most people who have polio are asymptomatic, but when you are symptomatic it is a debilitating disease. The CDC has not done any wastewater surveillance in Dutchess County although we have requested it from NYSDOH. Mr. McNary stated the Rotary in Hyde Park is interested in assisting with outreach and education if the department could use some assistance with educating the public.

Yesterday we held our Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) Summit at the Henry Wallace Center at FDR. Stakeholders from the community and staff reviewed the data from the Community Health Assessment (CHA) which was completed regionally and broken down into Dutchess County data. Ally Smith, Epidemiologist, and her team of Biostatisticians did a great job of presenting the information. After reviewing the data and breaking out into work-groups, the chosen priorities for this CHIP cycle are the same as they were for the last cycle, Chronic Disease Prevention and Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Prevention. The one difference will be that the focus will be on the root causes and having the most impact on preventing these issues from arising in the first place. The next step will be setting up committees and prioritizing our work to focus on these issues. Ally Smith, Epidemiologist, will be putting together a final report that we can share next month.

Substance use, sexually transmitting infections, suicides, obesity, smoking, chronic disease have all gotten worse. Two thirds of the population in Dutchess County is over-weight or obese. In trying to get down to the primary level we need to focus on children. We need to teach skills and coping mechanisms at a young age. One way we hope to have some impact is working with BOCES and the local school districts to improve health literacy by reimagining the Health curriculum in the K-12 schools in Dutchess County. The curriculum was last revised in 1998 and BOCES is on board for assisting with this endeavor. A committee comprised of teachers, school nurses, administrators, public health nurses, and public health advisors will be tasked to work on this revision. The goal is to teach them what makes them well, how they can manage their health and health emergencies with the hopes they go home and teach their families.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **HEALTH DISPARITIES – Dr. Fil & Dr. Nelson-Perron**

They have been working hard on getting their 12-person committee together to come up with some goals. So far they have reviewed data from the 2020-2023 Community Needs Assessment of the Community Action Partnership for Dutchess County. Two areas that have come up are Dental and Healthcare Coverage. For many it's a lack of education and maybe someone sitting down to help them navigate the system can make the difference. Dr. Nelson-Perron stated that maybe we should just choose one goal and focus on for one zip code. Dr. Lhungay stated he was onboard for the Healthcare Coverage. The group would also like to have an email address that could be on the website so people could reach out to them. We would be able to do this.

Dr. Santiago stated that our cities don't have fluoridated water, and MRC member who attended the CHIP was inquiring why the city water systems don't fluoridate the water. Parents must get a prescription from the pediatrician to get fluoride tablets for their children. This is a barrier because it's another cost and the parent needs to know to ask for this. This is where advocacy gets down to the primary level. All kids in NYS are eligible for free healthcare but parents aren't educated and don't know. Mr. Nelson inquired about how fluoridating the water works if you need a prescription to get it from the pharmacy. Putting fluoride in the water is a much smaller dose and while a prescription is required because the tablets are based on a child's weight. Mr. Nelson is willing to bring up the topic at the next Joint Water Board meeting. Mr. Ruggiero stated he would check with our Environmental Health Services to see if any of the local water systems do fluoridate the water. He knows some have in the past but there was some controversy and doesn't know how many currently do. Mr. McHoul stated that some of the water districts are very complicated as they sell water to different municipalities and sophisticated systems so there could be some issues with attempting this implementation. A bigger issue is that children who are on Medicaid also have dental coverage, but most private insurers do not include dental coverage in their health insurance policies.

**SANITARY CODE** – The Sanitary Code Article 25 Public Hearing had previously been postponed as we anticipated having more amendments to the Sanitary Code but those have been delayed so we need to schedule a Public Hearing for the amendments to Article 25. Mr. Nelson made a motion to hold a public hearing at 3:30 pm on October 20, 2022, on the proposed changes to Article 25 of the Dutchess County Sanitary Code. Mr. McNary seconded the motion and passed unanimously. Ms. Cady reminded them that a quorum was required to be present in-person for the Public Hearing which will be held at the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral & Community Health, 85 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 106, Poughkeepsie, NY.

**LEGISLATIVE REPORT** – Approved intermunicipal agreement with Ulster County to provide coverage of their 9-8-8 system as they do not have a hotline established. This is 24 hour/day coverage, so we are also expanding our workforce to accommodate the 9-8-8 system. All calls are routed based on area code of the phone calling and we have had a significant increase in calls so adding extra social workers. In the first weekend of 9-8-8 a 13-year-old was saved from committing suicide due to 9-8-8 call takers. There is federal funding for 9-8-8 but we need to expand our existing structure to accommodate the extra coverage area. Required the building

of a resource database for Ulster County and the working with law enforcement in Ulster County as well.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**BOARD OF HEALTH BUDGET LINE IN DBCH BUDGET** – Mr. Ruggiero stated that \$10,000 has been added to the Department of Behavioral & Community Health's budget for the Board of Health in 2023. This is still dependent upon the approval of the Dutchess County Legislature. More specific details of what the money is to be used for will be required. The Board of Health members thanked Dr. Santiago and Mr. Ruggiero and will put together a more specific plan for the use of the funds.

**DBCH CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE** – Mr. Ruggiero explained that the department does not have a specific program aimed at climate change but there are many things done that are beneficial to stopping climate change in our environmental health services and our ITAP program worked on a garden over the summer. If the Board of Health would like the department to take a look at something particular, we would be open to that. Also, NYSACHO (New York State Association of County Health Officials) is holding some virtual workshops on climate change over the next two months. Ms. Cady shared the schedule with the members so they can participate if interested.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**BOARD OF HEALTH WEBSITE** - A draft of a Board of Health website was presented to the Board for review. This page will be a part of the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral & Community Health website. It requires a mission statement which the board needs to work on.

**GUEST SPEAKER OCTOBER MEETING** – Ildiko Rabinowitz, Assistant Vice President for Health Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion, will be attending our October meeting. We will have Ms. Rabinowitz present before we get to the regular business of our meeting.

**HUDSON 7** – Mr. Nelson stated he participates in a group called the Hudson 7 which is an intermunicipal council representing the 7 municipalities that draw drinking water from the Hudson River. The council is meeting this evening to amend its by-laws and Dutchess County and Ulster County to the list of participating members. Each municipality is putting some money in with the goal of hiring an executive director. This group has worked with Central Hudson on the dredging and the Joint Water Board.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:** Mr. Nelson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Dr. Fil seconded, all were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 5:08 p.m.

**NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING:** Thursday, October 20, 2022, Public Hearing at 3:30 pm, Meeting at 4 pm

**2022 EXECUTIVE POSITIONS FOR THE BOARD OF HEALTH**

Dr. Lobsang T. Lhungay – President  
David McNary – Vice President  
Marc Nelson – Secretary

Minutes signed by:



Marc Nelson  
Secretary of the Board of Health



Wendy Cady  
Recording Secretary